



CITY OF DECATUR ILLINOIS

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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City Council appoints new councilperson, approves 6-month pause on new video gambling, amends food truck ordinance

Decatur, IL – Highlights from the January 17, 2023 City Council meeting include the appointment of a new City Council member, a 6-month moratorium on new video gambling establishments, and changes to the food truck ordinance.

New Council member appointment

On Tuesday night, the Decatur City Council approved the appointment of Dr. Dana Ray to fill the vacant seat left by Bill Faber. Councilman Faber announced his resignation on January 4, 2023. Dr. Ray will serve the remainder of Faber's unexpired term until new Council members are sworn in after the April 2023 election.

Dr. Ray previously served on the Decatur City Council from 2009-2019. She was appointed in 2009 to finish the two-year term of the late-Mayor Mike McElroy, then was elected twice for 4-year terms in 2011 and 2015. She is a physician, pastor, and certified executive coach, and is the medical director of Crossing Recovery Center. Dr. Ray also serves on the Advisory Board of the local Salvation Army and is a trustee of the Community Foundation of Macon County. She was honorably discharged from the Army Reserve at the rank of Staff Sergeant.

Moratorium on new video gambling

In an effort to slow the growth of video gambling, Council agreed to a 6-month moratorium on the issuance of any new video gaming licenses. City staff has requested this pause as they continue to work on and study ordinance changes that would aim to slow down the number of establishments seeking video gaming licenses.

One challenge the City is facing is businesses exploiting loopholes so they can offer video gambling. Staff believes it will take many amendments to perfect an ordinance that will achieve the Council's goals. This moratorium applies to any application submitted after January 1, 2023. Two applications in process prior to Jan. 1 are likely to be approved – one being the potential "Wash n Win" on W

Grand.

Additional efforts to curb video gaming include more aggressive auditing of businesses that offer video gaming that are not in compliance with the City Code and/or are failing to pay taxes. This process still includes a hearing and adjudication by the Liquor Commissioner before revoking any video gaming licenses.

Changes to food truck ordinance

Council also made changes to City Code Chapter 55.1, which regulates the fees and operations of food trucks. Several members asked that this item be discussed after truck owners and citizens expressed concerns about the fees to operate food trucks within the City.

An ordinance adopted in May 2022 established a \$500 fee to receive a food truck license from the City. Council on Tuesday amended this fee to be \$50 for a full year license, and \$25 if applying for only half a year. Additionally, Council removed the need for trucks to provide access to a bathroom facility.

Other business

The former Woodrow Wilson school building will be demolished. Council approved an intergovernmental agreement (IGA) with Decatur Public Schools to share the cost of demolition. The DPS School Board approved the IGA at their December 27, 2022 meeting, agreeing to pay the City one-half of the legal and demo costs. The City will demolish the school structure and clean the site. Once cleared, the City will transfer ownership of the site to DPS-61, who will be responsible for all further maintenance and upkeep of the property.

Council also amended the Alcoholic Beverage Code to increase the Class A license cap by one. This was required because of a previous settlement arrangement the City made when acquiring the land where the “New Back Door” previously sat, as needed for the Brush College Road Grade Separation project. This action could lead to the creation of the “Wash n’ Win” laundromat & video gaming establishment being considered at the West Grand retail strip next to “Save A Lot.” Council does not have control over this establishment being constructed.

More information about these topics can be found in the City Council Agenda packet, downloadable/viewable here: www.decaturlil.gov/mayor-and-council/council-meetings/

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